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ABSTRACT

This report furnishes examples of assessment and effectiveness activities at Columbia Basin College (Washington). In 1997, the college's Board of Trustees began using the Carver Model of policy governance and created a new college mission statement and related end states, which directly answer the question, "What good will be produced for which people, at what cost?" The college also developed a strategic planning model to measure inputs, throughputs, and accountability as tied to the end states and the new mission statement. Assessment and evaluation are conducted across the Columbia Basin College community, including academic and professional programs, general education requirements, facilities, community relations, and student services. The types of activities the college focuses on include: (1) institutional effectiveness, which involves creating a plan that outlined core indicators of effectiveness; (2) department/program level outcomes assessment, such as its nursing department assessment tool and the development of a common final by the Mathematics Department; (3) course level outcomes assessment, including a syllabus project and a "one-minute write"; (4) general education assessment, such as ASSET scores and a statistical analysis of the success of English courses; and (5) accountability/performance funding assessment, which is especially apparent at the Career and Transfer Centers. This document provides an overview of the process used to develop the college's assessment system, the general way in which the assessments and evaluations are conducted, and recommendations for further steps and ongoing evaluation. (EMH)

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Columbia Basin College

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Assessment & Effectiveness

Report to the College Community

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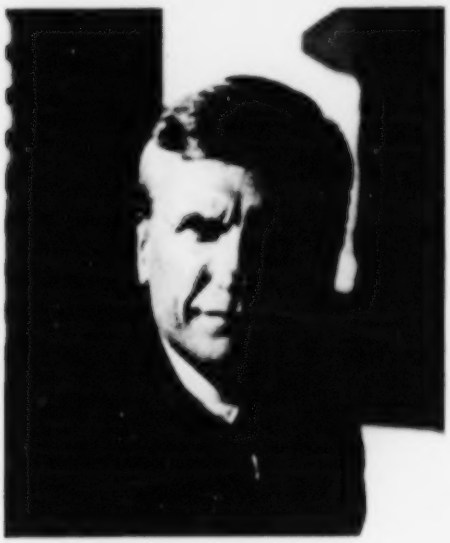
A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



This report highlights outcomes assessment at Columbia Basin College. As you will see, we have significantly increased our assessment efforts in the last four years.

These efforts focus on three levels of assessment: institutional, department/program, classroom. They emanate from the college's strategic planning model and are designed to determine how well CBC is doing in meeting the needs of our students and our communities.

Assessment is not an easy activity. Controversy swirls around its methods and value. Nevertheless, CBC believes that regular on-going assessment is critically important to the logical determination of both short and long-term goals.

Finally, assessment is a campus-wide activity. Over the years, many faculty and staff have worked significant hours in determining the methodology and gathering and analyzing data. I greatly appreciate their efforts.

Lee R. Thornton
President

ASSESSMENT AND EFFECTIVENESS AT COLUMBIA BASIN COLLEGE
A REPORT TO THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY

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ASSESSMENT AND EFFECTIVENESS AT COLUMBIA BASIN COLLEGE
A REPORT TO THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY

The values of an institution are revealed in the information it gathers and pays attention to.

Alexander W. (Sandy) Astin

Introduction

Assessment at Columbia Basin College has been ongoing in various forms since the college began offering classes in 1955. A statewide focus supported by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges began in the late 80's with funds provided to the community colleges to support assessment.

Early assessment activity at CBC centered on classroom assessment. A Title III grant brought attention and resources to assessment at various levels of the institution including the development of general education competencies (abilities).

Before the general education competencies could be fully implemented, the college became involved in an internal administrative struggle that resulted, in part, with the resignation of the college president. Since then, the college has focused on restoring trust through participatory governance and the use of data in decision making, planning, assessment, and institutional effectiveness. In support of that focus, the Office of Institutional Research and Marketing was created in 1997.

This report furnishes examples of assessment and effectiveness activities over time at Columbia Basin College. It is not meant to be an exhaustive account but provides highlights of the variety of assessment and effectiveness activity taking place at CBC since the early 90's.

Policy Governance

In 1997, the CBC Board of Trustees began using the Carver Model of policy governance and created a new college mission statement and related end states. The End States directly answer the question, "What good will be produced for which people, at what cost?" An annual evaluation is to be conducted to determine if the goals of the End States are being met. Columbia Basin College's End Statements read:

- CBC exists to provide people of the service district with access to the institution's educational programs.
- CBC exists to ensure that students successfully complete requirements that would enable them to transfer to upper division colleges and universities.
- CBC exists to ensure that students who successfully complete occupational training programs will be employed in and out of the service district.
- CBC exists to provide the college and the community with diverse and multicultural programs designed to improve our quality of life.

- CBC exists to promote the physical and emotional well being of its students and the community.

Strategic Planning Model

The college has developed a strategic planning model that will measure inputs, throughputs, and accountability as tied to the end states and the new college mission statement. The measurements best suited for the each End State and the technical aspects of gathering that information will be determined by the end of the 1998-99 academic year. The strategic planning model is displayed at the end of this report.

Data collected for the Core Indicators of Effectiveness included in the CBC Institutional Effectiveness Plan also measure aspects of the End States. The Effectiveness Plan is referred to in more detail later in this report under Institutional Level Assessment.

History and Role of the Current CBC Assessment Committee

In 1997 a CBC Assessment Committee was re-formed after a brief period of inactivity. The committee consisted of representatives from all the instructional divisions, student services, and Associated Students of CBC, with administrative representation and support from the Director of Institutional Research and Marketing.

The first project of the committee was to study the broad subject of assessment. This led to the establishment of the committee's purpose and the development of six guiding principles. The CBC Assessment Committee identified the following principles, which are still is use today:

- The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning.
- Assessment systems are fair to faculty and students.
- Professional collaboration and development support assessment.
- The broad college community is represented in assessment development.
- Communication about assessment is regular and clearly stated.
- Assessment systems are reviewed and improved on a regular basis.

The CBC Assessment Committee's statement of purpose:

- To determine, guide, and review CBC assessment efforts;
- To share and disseminate information about assessment with the goal of increased knowledge and support within the college community.
- To coordinate college assessment projects to avoid duplication of effort;
- To encourage the use of assessment results in the process of positive change.

Each year the committee develops annual goals. The goals for 1998-2000 are:

- develop core indicators for institutional effectiveness; determine baseline information and bench mark the indicators;

- provide support and help for student services and instructional faculty in determining program/department outcomes or administrative objectives;
- provide support and help to faculty in updating syllabi to include learning outcomes and assessment;
- implement general education outcomes and abilities;
- determine a general education assessment plan.
- institutionalize assessment practices in all areas of the college.

The Assessment Committee determined that assessment should occur at three general levels of the college: (1) at the institutional level though the development of an institutional effectiveness plan with core indicators of effectiveness, (2) at the departmental/program level though the development of student learning outcomes, or in the case of student services, administrative objectives, and (3) at the course level through determining student learning outcomes for each course syllabi including assessment methods for those outcomes.

Institutional Effectiveness at CBC

The Assessment Committee identified six reasons for developing an institutional effectiveness plan.

- Institutional effectiveness is a system or framework for looking at what we're doing and why we're doing it.
- It is a philosophy centered on quality and constant improvement.
- It can be a vehicle for positive change.
- It connects areas of the college in a variety of different ways.
- It has the potential of energizing faculty in the classroom.
- It has direct application to accreditation and the state of Washington accountability or performance funding measures.

Examples of Institutional Level Assessment

Institutional Effectiveness Plan

The committee began at the institutional level with the development of a CBC Institutional Effectiveness Plan with core indicators of effectiveness. The model used was one developed by the American Association of Community Colleges. This particular model was chosen because, with minor modification, it included the areas covered by CBC's mission and end states, was straightforward, and spoke directly to the mission of the college. The core indicators chosen by the committee were:

Core Indicator No. 1 – Student Progress
Student Goal Attainment
Student Persistence (Fall to Fall)
Degree Completion Rates

Core Indicator No.2--Transfer Preparation
Number and Rate Who Transfer
Performance After Transfer

Core Indicator No. 3 – Developmental Education
Success in Subsequent Related Course Work

Core Indicator No. 4 – Career Preparation
- Placement Rate in the Workforce
- Employer Assessment

Core Indicator No. 5 – Health and Wellness
- Employee Wellness
- Community Fitness
- Student Fitness
- Athletic Program
- Student, Faculty, and Staff Emotional Wellness

Core Indicator No. 6 – Customized Education
- Participant Assessment of Programs and Services
- Client Assessment of Programs And Services

Core Indicator No. 7 – Community Development
- Responsiveness to Community
- Participation Rate in CBC's Service District

Core Indicator No. 8 – General Education Outcomes

The plan was presented to the college community in December of 1997. Baseline data has been gathered for seven of the core indicators and data will continue to be gathered on a yearly basis. During 1999, the Assessment Committee will study the baseline data and begin to make benchmark determinations based on the baseline data. Strategies to increase effectiveness in all areas of the plan will be developed at the departmental/program and course levels. Assessment of the plan will occur yearly with the goal of providing a feedback loop for the continuous improvement of student learning processes. The Institutional Effectiveness Plan, supporting documentation and studies are available as an exhibit for accreditation.

Developing "End Statements" for the Columbia Basin College Board of Directors (aka TRI Study)

In 1995, the campus community recognized the need for reliable and objective information that identified or explained how CBC was positioned in the community. There were few, if any, informational baselines and to the extent the college was effective, evidence was lacking to support that proposition. Resources were provided to gather that evidence.

The TRI study involved over 1000 respondents from a variety of targeted constituencies both internal and external to CBC, and extensively used focus groups to gather their data. Accordingly, the information illuminated service deficiencies that required immediate remedial attention. More important, in the longer term, it led the college to develop a new mission statement and a set of related end states.

From the revised mission, a strategic planning model evolved and created intensified management interest in developing monitoring devices and effectiveness measurements. It also intensified the internal perception of needed commitment to staff development at all levels including management. The activities triggered by these and other studies continue to resonate in campus change.

Perception/Image Study

Because CBC had never attempted to formally investigate and define it's community image, the Washington State University, Murrow School of Communications was hired to engage in a systematic inquiry to objectively establish the view the citizens of Benton and Franklin County had of the college. Two WSU researchers completed the task in late 1997, and provided for the first time baseline information that would help the college improve if necessary, frame the college message properly, and choose the most effective media vehicles for stakeholder communication.

The sample of 400 respondents and the tabulated results yielded a one-hundred and thirty-page study. The study was circulated to the college community, especially administrative personnel. While the study did not uncover significant problem areas, it did confirm a widely held belief that the college image was very positive within the service area. This study, together with the one that had just been completed by the Strategic Effectiveness Group, reached many of the same conclusions with regard to overall public perception of the college.

Facilities Walk-Through Assessment

Beginning in 1999, the Director of Plant Operations, accompanied by appropriate staff, such as faculty, classified, deans, and other exempt staff, conducted a walk-through for each CBC building. The purpose of the walk-through was to review the status of each building and make notes on maintenance needs, special clean-up areas, and the need for remodeling or updating. Special emphasis is being placed on receiving feedback from individuals that use each facility.

After this year's facilities walk-through, a combined-needs list has been compiled by the Director of Plant Operations and priorities for maintenance and other changes are being established. The list is serving as a central way of gathering information on each building and has already assisted in setting general maintenance as a higher priority on the CBC campus. The facilities walk-through information will be added to other facilities assessment tools such as the new software (Benchmate) that tracks general facilities maintenance items and SPAG, the committee that reviews the facilities usage.

The walk-through conducted this year has already resulted in a number of items being accomplished such as general painting, correcting water damage, plumbing, and electrical upgrades. The walk-through appears to be the best way to assess the current condition of the campus and will be an annual spring activity for CBC.

College Catalog Renewal

Because of the ten-year accreditation self study, CBC decided to advance the normal publication date of the college catalog to precede the site visit. Institutional Research, in partnership with the College Relation's office, had already held student focus groups in order to obtain a user perspective from the catalog's primary audience. The focus groups illuminated some areas for improvement including the need to

reorganize and re-order catalog components. The catalog was also reviewed extensively by the deans and discussed by FLAG. Some members thought the catalog was too institutional in language and unfriendly in tone. A few thought we actually had a "catalog with an attitude." Ad hoc task groups found some inaccuracies and omissions, and set about to remedy them, including the drafting of new text, which went through a variety of reviews and approvals.

Following this fact-finding and analysis, the College Relation's office was tasked with producing a modernized catalog, and given budget enhancements to accomplish it. They retained a contract editor, who had extensive catalog experience. The editor suggested alternative text and provided a style guide for college use. Additional editing cycles beyond the norm were built into the time line, and selected staff were invited to participate in the catalog revision.

As a result, the staff believes the recent catalog published this year is more accurate, complete, understandable, and friendly than its predecessor by a substantial margin. This belief will be tested with follow-up assessment, as students become users of the document. Additional budget was also provided to place the catalog on the Internet and to keep it updated.

Community Connections

Project Justification: The Board of Trustees' governance model mandates that it establish and maintain dialogue with our college's community and use this dialogue to help develop their End Statements. When the trustees adopted their new model in 1996, this mandate proved challenging.

How could the trustees establish a two-way dialogue with our community? A staff member in the College Relations office adopted the project and began researching possible strategies.

Research: The college conducted two research projects to establish baseline information about the community's perceptions. These studies were broad in scope, but one community expectation became clear: the community expected the college to be a leader in collaborative problem solving. This, then, became a new challenge for the college.

How can the college create a context for collaboration and maintain its dialogue with the community? College staff continued their research into possible collaboration strategies.

The College Relations staff member used traditional academic research to find an appropriate strategy. She conducted a literature review in communication, collaboration and community college fields. She also used more informal research, including discussions with communication professors at Washington State University and staff members at other schools that use the Carver Model. Based on this research, the college committed to the Community Connections project.

Project Implementation: The Community Connections project has two purposes: to establish a context for collaboration and to enhance the college's environmental scan of the

community. To do this, the college hosted a three-day conference for community members in June 1998. A diverse set of people, from small business owners to Hanford management to educators and clergy, came together at the CBC campus. The Public Dialogue Consortium, a national-leader in public issue development, professionally facilitated the event

Over those three days, 30 community members worked in small groups to explore the Tri-Cities' resources, challenges and goals. They developed resource lists, needed programs and services, and action items. They collaborated on their dreams for the community, and one of them is now coming true. The "2000: Year of Our Children" awareness campaign is now in the planning stages.

The Community Connections conference was both a service to the Tri-Cities community and a unique way for the college to gather valuable information about our publics.

Follow Up: A summary of the 1998 Community Connections was forwarded to the trustees, who have used the information to help develop possible Ends. The college has also committed to a second annual Community Connections, scheduled for May 17. A new staff position, Community Connections Coordinator, has also been established to coordinate the trustees' dialogue with our community.

Development, Implementation, and Analysis of the 60-Minute Matrix

The 60-minute class schedule was first proposed by the students in 1995, pilot tested with groups of volunteer faculty in the fall of 1997, and fully implemented in academic year 1998-1999. A survey of faculty and students in spring of 1998, following the pilot project, indicated a level of satisfaction that warranted instituting the 60-minute matrix full time. The matrix was in use for the majority of classes taught at CBC by the fall of 1998.

The 60-minute matrix continued through Spring Quarter of 1999. As part of the research on whether the matrix was meeting the needs of the students and faculty and should be continued, two surveys were developed – one for students and one for faculty.

Student survey results: Results of the student survey provided important information on the advantages and disadvantages of the 60-minute matrix. The major findings of the student survey indicate that the 60-minute matrix is working well for students. The major advantage, as seen by the students, was that it allowed an extra day to study; the major disadvantage was that they forgot information over the three-day class break. 96% asked that the 60-minute matrix be continued. This would constitute a mandate for continuing the matrix unless other studies indicate otherwise. An expanded report is available as an exhibit for accreditation.

Faculty Survey Results: From 1955 until 1997 the instructional time unit used by CBC to offer courses was typically 50 minutes meeting five days a week. During 1997, faculty volunteers offered approximately forty sections each quarter on an alternative 60-minute four-day matrix. Results from that one-

year pilot were positive from both faculty and students.

Following this one-year experiment, results were again evaluated and the option was expanded. Beginning Fall Quarter 1998, all faculty were permitted the option of using the 60-minute matrix or retaining the 50-minute. Most chose the 60-minute option. Approximately 100 faculty were again surveyed toward the end of Winter Quarter 1999. Of those responding, 61% of the faculty generally supported the 60-minute matrix.

However, important concerns were raised by the minority respondents that deserve careful scrutiny. Among these are how to more effectively assign and monitor student labor over the three-day separation between formal instruction, and how to more effectively utilize the non-instructional day. At this writing there has been lively campus debate involving, FLAG, the Faculty Senate, dean's group and the campus e-mail. The classified staff has also joined the discussion, and they plan their own survey to determine how the matrix has affected work patterns in clerical, building maintenance and special services.

This project is an example of how CBC uses research to "close the loop" in the assessment of the implementation and follow-up stages of instituting new policy.

Assessment Web Page

The problem was to find a way to make assessment material and research readily available to CBC faculty.

The solution was to create a Web page on the Internet that consists of links to assessment activity and research on a global basis. This provides a centralized source of information readily accessible to anyone with access to Internet.

The first step of the procedure was to set up a basic Web page with an attached e-mail address. The second step of the procedure was to search the Internet (the World Wide Web) to find all appropriate sources of information regarding educational assessment. Links were then set up between the CBC Assessment Page and the various sites, linking CBC with assessment activities all over the world. The Assessment Page is set up to receive e-mail from anyone (CBC or not) who has knowledge of other links of interest. This CBC page could become a clearinghouse for Internet access to educational activity and research worldwide.

Check it out at:
http://www.cbc2.org/assessment/asspge.htm

Department/Program Level Outcomes Assessment

The most direct improvement in student learning occurs at the departmental and classroom levels. Outcomes assessment began at CBC in order to systematize a process that faculty had been doing intuitively. Now there is a process for identifying, naming, and assessing student learning outcomes. For departmental/program level assessment, the CBC Assessment Committee turned to James O. Nichols at the University of Mississippi. The committee used

Nichols, "A Practitioner's Handbook for Institutional Effectiveness and Student Outcomes Assessment Implementation" as a guide and adapted the implementation process to our institution.

Instructional departments and programs: The departmental/program plan required departments to come together and determine what the student learning outcomes of their departments would be – something that does not occur in every department on a regular basis. The departments/programs determined between one and five learning outcomes for their department along with measurements and criteria for success.

By January of 1999, 98% of the departments had submitted their Assessment Books to the Assessment Committee. Help in developing measurements and criteria for success was given to the faculty by the Assessment Committee when requested by departments or programs. Various members of the committee met with department leads during the draft process to assist in determining what could be measured and how best to measure it.

Student Services departments/programs: Student Services also developed their department/program objectives in the same manner as the instructional programs with the goal of supporting student learning. Again, 98% of the departments/programs had completed their objectives, measurements, and criteria for success by the end of Fall Quarter, 1998.

Data was collected by the various departments/programs during Winter Quarter of 1999 on their listed outcomes/objectives. The results of that data will be reported to the Division Deans and Student Services Deans in time for the budgetary process in April. Budget forms have been modified to include assessment information in the budget requests. Budgetary requests using assessment information will be tracked and results reported to the college and the Assessment Committee by the Director of Institutional Research. Outcomes, their measures, criteria for success, and use of results will be evaluated yearly, thus closing the assessment loop.

The Departmental/Program Outcomes, the Administrative Objectives for Student Services, and the data gathered in support of the outcomes are available as exhibits for accreditation.

Examples of Department/Program Level Assessment

Nursing Department Assessment Tool: National Council Licensing Exam Summary Profiles

Each year the Nursing Department purchases NCLEX Summary Profiles. This is a service provided by the testing company contracted by the National Council of State Boards to administer the RN licensure exams nationally. Every Associate Nursing Degree graduate must take the NCLEX exam to attain licensure as a RN.

Purpose: The NCLEX Summary Profiles are used to assess the performance of our Associate Degree graduates on the licensing exam. Because every graduate must pass the exam to be licensed, this is one tool we

use to assess the curriculum and instruction within the program. The report provides detailed information about the graduate's performance on every part of the test plan. Each report compares the performance to past year's graduates in the same content area.

Additionally, comparative data is included for the following areas: Our graduates performance as compared with all other graduates in Washington State; our graduates performance as compared with all other Associate Degree programs in Washington State; our graduates performance as compared with all graduates nationally; our graduates' performance as compared with all Associate Degree graduates nationally.

We purchase the service, so it is not necessary for the department to do any specific research to develop the data. The role of the department members is to carefully evaluate the data for trends and use this information as well as other tools to make needed changes in the program. This is done on an annual basis during Winter Quarter.

Results: Up until the past two years there has been relative stability in the performance of CBC graduates on the NCLEX exams. Our pass rate has consistently been 95-100% for first time writers. In the past two years there has been a slight decline. We are in the process of fully evaluating the implications of the data. We have noted the following:

Advanced Placement LPN's performance has declined more significantly than the native students have.

There are a few specific content areas that have declined, while others have remained stable or improved. We have had a turn over in faculty. Two long-term faculty retired, and one other tenured faculty member moved to another school to teach. Prior to this time, the faculty had been very stable. We have more under-prepared students in the college and in the nursing program than ever before.

How has the information been used: We have begun a thorough curriculum review. With the number of new faculty, we believe we need to make sure all content areas are included in the instructional program. We have made the assumption this is true. We are validating that fact. We will make any needed changes as we work through this process.

We have made changes in the LPN Advanced Placement course content for summer 1999. We believe this will better prepare these specific students to pass the exam.

We are requiring all last quarter students to take a Pre-RN assessment exam this Spring Quarter for the first time. The results will provide us with detailed data about their knowledge base in a large range of content areas.

We are using a mentoring system for all new faculty.

Future plans: We will continue to use the NCLEX Summary Profiles as one of our assessment tools. We will evaluate the profiles as we make changes and make any additional needed changes.

Student Services Career Center

Annually at the end of Spring Quarter, a survey is mailed to students who used the Career Center resources during the academic year. The surveys utilize postage paid return mail to encourage students to return them. The feedback received has assisted the center in program planning and the changing of services. Students share their thoughts about the center's resources and the assistance available. Knowing what is working for the students and what is not working, or helping, benefits the student and facilitates positive program changes. One of the most common complaints the first year of the survey was not enough testing follow up. Many students were tested, however, few were having their results interpreted by a counselor. The Counseling Department had gone through training on using the Myers-Briggs and the Strong Interest Inventory in career planning but students were not utilizing the services available to them.

After reviewing the survey and consulting with the Counseling Department, we decided it would be mandatory for every student to go through a full interpretation with a counselor before receiving their results. Upon completion of testing, students are scheduled an appointment to return to the Career Center within two weeks to meet with a counselor. We know this helps students understand their testing results better because this past year there were no negative comments, and the Career Center received good and/or excellent ratings on the annual survey question, "Counselor availability for test interpretation."

During Winter Quarter, 1999, there were 132 MBTI tests and 107 Strong Interest Inventory tests given to students via the computer lab.

Environmental Enhancement

In the mid-eighties the Business Office fielded numerous complaints regarding the learning environment in classrooms and labs. Facilities were too hot, too cold, too dark, poor air quality etc. However, the energy costs per square foot of space was staggering compared to state averages. Extensive investigation revealed thirty-year-old facilities with out of date mechanical systems, non-functioning controls, and major shortcomings with windows and lighting. What was needed was skilled planning and people who could assess, and correct problems in the short run while building a longer-range solution as resources became available.

Attrition and retirements permitted the selection of new staff with the skills and know-how to attack the problem. A half million-dollar grant provided some seed money and the solutions were applied on an incremental basis starting with equipment that simply didn't work. Windows were replaced, thermostats and controls updated and systematically, facilities and equipment began to reduce if not eliminate the more egregious malfunctions and related complaints. As new facilities were planned, they were fitted into a comprehensive scheme that blended the original buildings to the new, both cosmetically and functionally. Dramatic energy savings were realized to the point that CBC has won recognition from Bonneville Power and other agencies for exemplary efficiency measures.

More importantly, recent surveys of faculty and staff completed within the last year indicate a relative absence of learner and staff complaints typical of a dozen years ago. Added positive news is the increasing possibility that this legislative session will produce sufficient renovation money to substantially replace the campus electrical system.

Development of a Common Final by the Math Department

The Mathematics Department at Columbia Basin College instituted a common final exam in Math 91, Beginning Algebra, in the Fall Quarter of 1997. A member of the Mathematics Department, who is not teaching the course, writes the final exam, and all sections of this course are required to take the test. The department also began giving a common final exam to all Math 95 (Intermediate Algebra) sections.

The department completed a self-study in 1994 and found large discrepancies in the quality/amount of mathematics learned by the students passing the course. Adjunct faculty members who are not on campus on a daily basis teach approximately 50% of these sections. Instituting a common final exam was a way of:

- Guaranteeing that all required material was covered.
- Students passing the course knew some mathematics.
- Providing feedback to instructors on strengths/weaknesses.
- Showing students had the necessary mathematics background to enroll in the next math course.

The results of the Math 91 course have been mixed. The department collected data on all students who passed Math 91 and then enrolled in Math 95 the next quarter. The department had hoped for a correlation between the Math 91 final exam score and the corresponding grade in Math 95. This correlation did not materialize.

Effective Fall Quarter, 1998, the department changed the grading scheme in both courses from pass/fail to a decimal grade, with a grade of 2.0 or better required to move on to the next math course. Data is being collected for this school year and the department will try to correlate the performance in both courses. Ultimately, our goal is to improve student success in the subsequent class.

The In-Class Essay for English 98/99

Purpose of the study: To assure the English department that all students exiting CBC's developmental English program (English 98/99) had the same basic level of mastery, the department decided to implement an in-class essay that students needed to pass to be eligible to pass the course. This essay is graded by a group of English faculty, instead of having individual instructors assessing their own students' work.

Fact finding/research: The English department had discovered that without such an in-class essay the pass rates for the developmental English class had gone up significantly.

Implementation: The English department began administering an in-class essay at the end of each quarter. In

addition to passing the course requirements, students also needed to pass the in-class essay to pass the course. Using a dictionary and handbook, students have two hours to write a three-to-five paragraph essay. The essays are graded in a group setting by two readers on a pass/no pass basis. If there is a split decision, a third reader breaks the tie.

Review and analysis: The English department feels this process has been beneficial for a number of reasons 1.) It helps achieve better quality control; 2.) It helps the department communicate more effectively and find consensus in regards to the expectations for English 98/99 students. 3.) The instructors are then able to communicate those expectations more effectively to the students.

Course Level Outcomes and Assessment

Assessment and effectiveness occurring at the course level happens in a variety of ways. This includes regular review of course syllabi, classroom assessment projects by faculty, involvement of faculty in special projects for Performance Funding (accountability issues), and with professional development activities designed to educate and support faculty in their use of assessment.

Examples of Course Level Assessment

<u>The Syllabus Project</u>

The Syllabus Project is an accelerated attempt to shift college curriculum from a teaching emphasis to a learning emphasis in the most basic way faculty communicate course information to our students, i.e., through the course syllabus. Learner success is measured in three outcomes driven dimensions and clearly expressed on each revised course syllabus. They are knowledge objectives, (what a learner is to know), behavioral objectives (what a learner can do with that knowledge), and general abilities, (what skills are developed that are generalized and transferable to other arenas.) Additionally, each syllabus may reflect a work load expectation of hours of labor necessary to satisfactorily achieve the course objectives.

All course syllabi, plus a related assignment for each, were to be completed in two quarters and filed in the divisional offices for each department. The assignment submitted with each syllabus reflects how the assignment will enhance a specific outcome identified by the course syllabus.

Faculty from another college that had transformed its curriculum were brought to campus as consultants to prepare a CBC team of faculty, who then assisted other faculty within their respective departments to revise existing syllabi.

Faculty have revealed the need to rethink their approach in the process of revising syllabi and some report making changes in the manner and tools that they employ to help students succeed. Other faculty have indicated that the revision process caused them to forge new teaching techniques and different assessment methods to accommodate the shift in perspective and practice from teaching to learning.

One-Minute Write

In early June of 1991, a group of Institutional Effectiveness/Assessment-involved individuals from CBC attended The National AAHE Conference in San Francisco. A pre-conference workshop conducted by assessment guru, Thomas A. Angelo, was offered and attended by English and math faculty members. While there were many helpful techniques presented and demonstrated (mostly from *Classroom Assessment Techniques*), one particular classroom research technique has "stuck" to the extent that faculty still use it. It is a variation of the "One Minute Write." It is a very simple activity. At the end of a classroom activity, the teacher passes out 3 x 5 index cards and asks the students to write (anonymously) what particular things were of interest to the student--anything that really impressed him/her about the activity/class. On the back of the card, the student is then asked to write anything that he/she still has questions about--"muddy points."

The information gathered from these cards has been very helpful in several ways. Obviously, it helps keep a monitor on the actual thinking and learning that is going on in a particular activity. It is often easy to be misled by a lack of questions into believing everyone understands a particular point or concept. Also, the responses can be used as a starting point for discussions in the next class session.

In September of 1991, two faculty members who had attended the conference and were using the technique in their classrooms presented an in-service workshop for CBC faculty on this technique.

Anatomy Class Study Using Writing and Discipline-Specific Knowledge

The purpose of the Biology Department Assessment was to address the success of the intended course outcome of scientific literacy in Biology. This was defined as the ability to read with comprehension, write with clarity, and communicate effectively using the language of the discipline. A positive outcome is particularly important for academic transfer and pre-health science students who all take Core Biology 111, and require competency to succeed in subsequent science courses. Assessment of Biology 111 also met predetermined goals of trying to avoid sampling bias by targeting larger numbers of students taught by multiple instructors.

The Biology Department discussed, in a series of meetings, the means of assessment and the criteria for success. Evaluation of a common essay portion of a classroom test was selected as a means that evaluated all the criteria and assured individual student contribution. Many other department writing activities, such as lab reports, are completed as teams. The criteria for success was that 70% of essays would be judged by all the faculty to have met the criteria of correct content, clarity, and effective use of the language of the discipline.

As a pilot study, a common essay on cellular respiration was given to all students (27) in two sections of Biology 111 taught by different instructors. The essays were collated, students names removed, and all were graded by five Biology Department faculty on a "yes" or "no" basis. Either a student met the instructor's criteria for successful

demonstration of the intended outcome or not. The results were then averaged.

68% of the essays were judged to successfully demonstrate completion of the intended outcome. This was slightly less than the criteria for Departmental success of 70%. The results suggested that (1) a more reliable survey would require more students in more sections on an ongoing basis and (2) that instructors will need to develop methods to increase student preparation that leads to better performance in written communication in biology. Further development of this project, including the refinement of scoring rubrics, will continue based on these findings.

General Education Assessment

During the 1997-98 academic year, numerous meetings of the General Education Committee were held. Representatives from each division were asked to attend, and participation was welcomed from all faculty, who were informed of the topics of each meeting, and invited to attend. Deans attended some meetings, as did the Institutional Researcher.

General education standards were analyzed in terms of:
(a) substance – what subject matter should every student master to be considered a college-educated person?
(b) process – what general abilities for processing experience, facts and reality should a college-educated person have?
(c) workload – what level of workload is appropriate for college level work and how should we measure the average hours per week a course requires of students?
(d) remediation – how complete should remediation be, and how inclusive should it be, before students are allowed to take college level courses?

Substance: Approximately half of the participants in the general education discussion believed understanding modern political and economic structures was so important that such knowledge should be a required component of the AA degree. However, the consensus necessary for such a radical homogenization of social science general education did not emerge.

Other than understanding capitalism and the modern constitutional state, and to a lesser extent knowledge of evolution, no other subject matter received a significant plurality of support for mandatory inclusion in the general education requirements of the AA degree.

Process (General Abilities): There was unanimity that students must be able to read with comprehension, write clearly, think well, and have enough exposure to mathematics and the scientific method to negotiate the modern world. Regarding writing, English composition courses have standardized their expectations with departmental syllabi, and hope to add departmental exit exams as they can be funded. Math has already increased its number of departmental exit exams. The syllabus project asks faculty to clarify how their courses develop these, or any other, general abilities and how the course assignments sustain critical thinking within the discipline.

The faculty discussions made clear that an abstract commitment to "critical thinking" has little meaning until it is translated into discipline-based modes of analysis. Improving pedagogy to achieve this goal is an ongoing commitment. Peer review is being expanded to help faculty refine the analytical value of their coursework.

A long-run ideal may be to implement a "rising junior" essay examination that requires application of knowledge developed in the general education courses. This remains a work in progress as to design and funding.

Workload: As a working document, faculty noted that the Washington Administrative Code defines lecture course "credit" as one hour of lecture and two hours of study. The Syllabus Project has a section asking faculty to become conscious of the weekly study time requirements of their assignments. Since this component of the Syllabus Project was discussed, CBC's Institutional Researcher, state data, and national data, have shown that students do not study enough outside of class. The national data showed that freshmen averaged 3.8 hours per week. The state data was better, as was CBC's. Nonetheless, this is an important area for measurement and monitoring, and faculty hope to develop efficient and affordable tools of measurement.

Remediation: The faculty groups questioned whether students should be taking college level courses before their reading and writing abilities were sufficiently developed to assure academic success. Comprehensive remediation is being explored at CBC. Concerns raised include fears that students will be driven away, or otherwise demoralized, if they cannot begin to accumulate at least some college credit in their first quarters at CBC.

More complete measurement of students' abilities, when they arrive at CBC, would have three major values: developing feedback to the high schools about their programs; providing a baseline for CBC to measure value-added by their degrees; and giving CBC the information about how much remediation would be necessary to have all students fully ready for college level courses.

Summary: The syllabus project is the first step in teaching faculty how to *operationalize* student development in their courses. By theorizing knowledge objectives, and then translating them into student performance objectives, faculty are beginning to think in *measurable* terms. Only after they clarify their concepts in measurable ways can they begin to further operationalize learning into actual measurement instruments. This brick-by-brick approach is meant to avoid the common assessment impediments of banal generalities and inept measures.

Examples of General Education Assessment

<u>ASSET Scores and Success in Reading Intensive Courses</u>

As a start to developing meaningful assessments for general education, the Assessment Committee decided to bring issues of the Foundation Skills of General Education which are: Communication (Reading, Writing, and Speech) and Quantitative Skills to the

discussion and affirmation. As a start to this process, it was decided to begin with the Foundation Skill or ability of Reading.

ASSET scores for Fall Quarter of 1998 showed that 5.7% (62) students tested at the 5th grade and below level; 6.5% (70) at the 6th to 8th grade level; 35% (378) at the 9th-10th grade level; and 52.7% (569) at 11th-12th grade (college level).

As support for either recommending or requiring students to take remedial Reading if their ASSET scores indicated it, a study was done of students enrolled in reading intensive courses Winter Quarter, 1999. The designation of the "reading intensive" courses came from the Deans of the Divisions because of their familiarity with the amount of reading required by various faculty teaching similar courses.

There were 629 students in the study; 83 did not have ASSET scores listed and so were dropped from the sample. The number of students in the study at the 5th grade and below and 6th-8th grade-reading levels was too small to make any assumptions (total of 19 students). 146 students had ASSET scores indicating a 9th and 10th grade reading level and 381 students had an 11th-12th grade reading level.

The study group did not mirror the ASSET scores of incoming Fall Quarter students. There were far fewer with low ASSET scores in the sample group than those taking the ASSET test Fall Quarter. This would indicate many students with low reading skills are not taking reading intensive courses. However, there are findings from this study to indicate that students are more successful in reading intensive courses if their reading skills are college level. 46% of those enrolled in the reading intensive classes with a 9th-10th grade reading level received less than a 2.0. Of those with 11th-12th grade-reading skills, 27% received less than a 2.0. Therefore, students were 35% more likely to receive a 2.0 or more if their reading skills were at what is considered college level (11th-12th grade reading level).

This study provided enough of an indication of success or lack of success tied to the ASSET reading levels to bring the question to the Curriculum Committee for their discussion. Results of that discussion are pending.

<u>Statistical Analysis of the Success of English Courses</u>

Purpose of the study: We simply wondered how successfully our English classes were actually preparing students for other English classes and other academic classes. To test the success of our classes, we decided to examine the GPA's of students in the following three areas:

We compared English 101 GPA's of students who took English 98/99, then English 101, to the English 101 GPA's of students who tested directly into English 101. Our hope was that our developmental program would be preparing students well enough to compete with the students who tested directly into English 101.

We compared the GPA's in sociology and psychology courses of those students who had completed English 101 prior to taking the psychology or

sociology course, to the sociology and psychology GPA's of students who had not completed English 101 prior to taking the psychology or sociology course. Our hope was that those students who had already taken English 101 would have acquired skills that would enable them to get a higher GPA.

We compared literature GPA's of those students who had taken English 101 prior to taking a literature course, to the literature GPA's of those students who had not taken English 101 prior to taking a literature course. Our hope was that those students who had already taken English 101 would have acquired skills that would enable them to get a higher GPA.

Fact finding/research: We asked the Institutional Research Office's instructional research team to gather the necessary GPA information

Implementation: Once the IR team gathered the information we needed, our department secretary then calculated the results for our three areas of interest.

Review and analysis: Our results for the three areas of inquiry are as follows:

1. The students who tested directly into English 101 did have a higher GPA over those students who had first gone through the developmental program. However, the range of grade differential does not seem that significant. We have done some comparisons with other community colleges, and their differential is much higher.

2. We have found no significant difference in GPA's for students that have had English 101 prior to taking a psychology or sociology course. These results surprised us, but we are now looking into how much writing is actually required in these courses. Our assumption was these courses were writing intensive.

3. We have found a significant increase in the GPA's for students who have taken English 101 prior to taking a literature course. The skills they have acquired in English 101 do indeed seem to give them a significant advantage over students who lacked English 101.

We will be using this research to help us determine appropriate prerequisites, change course curriculum, and inform the rest of the college community so that they may also make changes if they deem them necessary.

Accountability – Performance Funding Assessment

"Not everything that can be counted counts; and not everything that counts can be counted."

Albert Einstein

Assessment through accountability occurs at the direction of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and is legislatively driven assessment. In 1997-99, accountability occurred in four goal areas: Workforce, Transfer, Student Efficient Use of the System, and Core Course Completion. The strategies developed by the joint CBC Assessment Committee and Performance Funding Committee included assessment at the

Committee included assessment at the departmental/program level and at the course level. It is narrow and specific.

CBC has developed an assessment plan based on data to be gathered in Winter Quarter of 1999. Copies of results of the 1997 and 1998 Performance Funding plans will be available as exhibits for accreditation. Information on the goal areas and strategies developed to improve are reported to the college community and Board of Trustees yearly. A Report Card to the Tri-Cities Community based on the results of the accountability measures is planned for the next biennium using the new nine goal areas.

New areas of emphasis have been developed for the next legislative biennium and are larger in scope and closer to college goals than the previous goal areas. These new goals include: (1) Access to affordable Higher Education; (2) Responsive to customer needs; (3) Workforce education and training for the 21st Century; (4) Increase basic skills, (5) Diversity of students and programs; (6) Using new technologies; (7) Student achievement; (8) A first class faculty and staff; and (9) A system based on collaboration.

Accountability is an issue that is gaining legislative interest across the country. Accountability in some form will be with us from this point forward. The challenge with accountability in the state of Washington is making the process and the measurements meaningful to the colleges and the communities they serve.

Institutional effectiveness and accountability have fundamentally different values. Institutional effectiveness is tied to the college mission – determining if our performance matches our purpose. Accountability, as it has been demonstrated in Washington the last two years, is more concerned with how the college demonstrates cost effectiveness to its various constituencies. Institutional effectiveness is formative while accountability is summative. Institutional effectiveness emphasizes learning outcomes and accountability focuses more on efficiency. Institutional effectiveness is both process and product; accountability is mainly product.

Examples of Accountability Assessment

Math Department Raises Expectations

In an effort to improve the success rate of students in Math 91 and Math 95, the math department has been studying both the incoming and outgoing students for these classes. To check the incoming student, we looked at students' ASSET placement scores and grades in previous math classes. We found students scoring on the lower end of the acceptance range of the ASSET tests had lower pass rates. Students whose final grade was less than 2.0 on a prerequisite math class had a pass rate of only 40 percent in the next math class, while students with a final grade of 2.0 to 2.9 had a pass rate of 65 percent. As a result, the Math department has raised ASSET cutoff scores for placement into math courses and now requires a grade of 2.0 to advance to the next course in any math sequence.

To check the outgoing student, the Math department instituted department-

generated final exams for Math 91 and for Math 95. A student must score above a predetermined minimum score on the final exam to pass the course with a grade of 2.0 or better. Without a 2.0 they cannot proceed into the next math class. We are also studying the success of students in succeeding math courses like Math 104 and Math 110 in relation to student course grades and final exam grades for Math 91 and Math 95.

Based on the results of a database of student ASSET scores and student grades in math courses taken at CBC, the Math department also decided to change the grading of Math 91 and Math 95 from P/Z to decimal grading. Because of the phasing out of intermediate algebra (Math 101) as a college level math course, students in an intermediate algebra course between Fall 1996 and Fall 1997 could be enrolled in either Math 95 or Math 101.

Even though students enrolled in these two courses attended the same class, the pass rate for students enrolled in Math 95, which was graded P/Z, was significantly lower than the pass rate for students enrolled in Math 101, which was graded using the decimal system. Based on this data, we concluded that P/Z grading resulted in lower pass rates. Indeed, the pass rate for Math 95 during fall 1998 (the first quarter that Math 95 was not graded P/Z) increased from 58 percent to 62 percent.

The evidence gathered from students confirmed what some faculty had already observed in their classrooms. It was observed that many good students would stop coming to class after they had passed the first two tests and knew they could pass the class. Observations like this led the Math Department to analyze the P/Z requirement more closely and the resulting data helped to better assess what faculty were doing and, perhaps more importantly, how students were responding.

Student Services Transfer Center

Approximately 45% of the students at CBC are transfer-intent students. Knowing this and having only six counselors on the Pasco campus indicated a need for a centralized and easily accessible location where all transfer material could be kept. Transfer guides from the most frequently requested colleges and universities are kept in a central location along with college catalogs from across the state and the nation. This made finding information easier for students. However, students were still requesting more help.

The next step the Transfer Center took was to establish contacts with the universities in Washington and invite them to have a quarterly presence on our campus. All except one of the public universities in the state accepted the invitation and have been in the Transfer Center each quarter to assist students with questions, transfer problems, degree planning and general information.

The Career Center tracks the number of students visiting with the university representatives each quarter. The number of students using this service has steadily increased since the center opened. There were 52 students during the Fall Quarter and 87 during the Winter Quarter this academic year that met with representatives.

Each visit is advertised in the student daily newspaper, on the student bulletin boards, and on the college's electronic bulletin board. The university recruiters have been very happy with the student numbers and willingly return each quarter to assist our students make a smooth transfer to the 4-year college or university of their choice.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Institutional effectiveness is a valuable resource for decision making and student learning at CBC. Meaningful student outcomes assessment at CBC is in the beginning stages; however, the process has begun, accomplishment has occurred, and will continue on a cycle of improvement on a yearly basis. Development and refinement of CBC's Strategic Planning Model will continue with measurements and comparative data researched for External Environment, End States, and Accountability.

Course level assessment through regular syllabi review feeds into the departmental level assessment. Departments determine yearly if their objectives are being met and outcomes, as determined by on-going assessment, are to be continued or changed. Curriculum and teaching methods are changing as a result of syllabi review. What happens at the departmental/program level feeds into institutional level assessment through the CBC Institutional Effectiveness Plan.

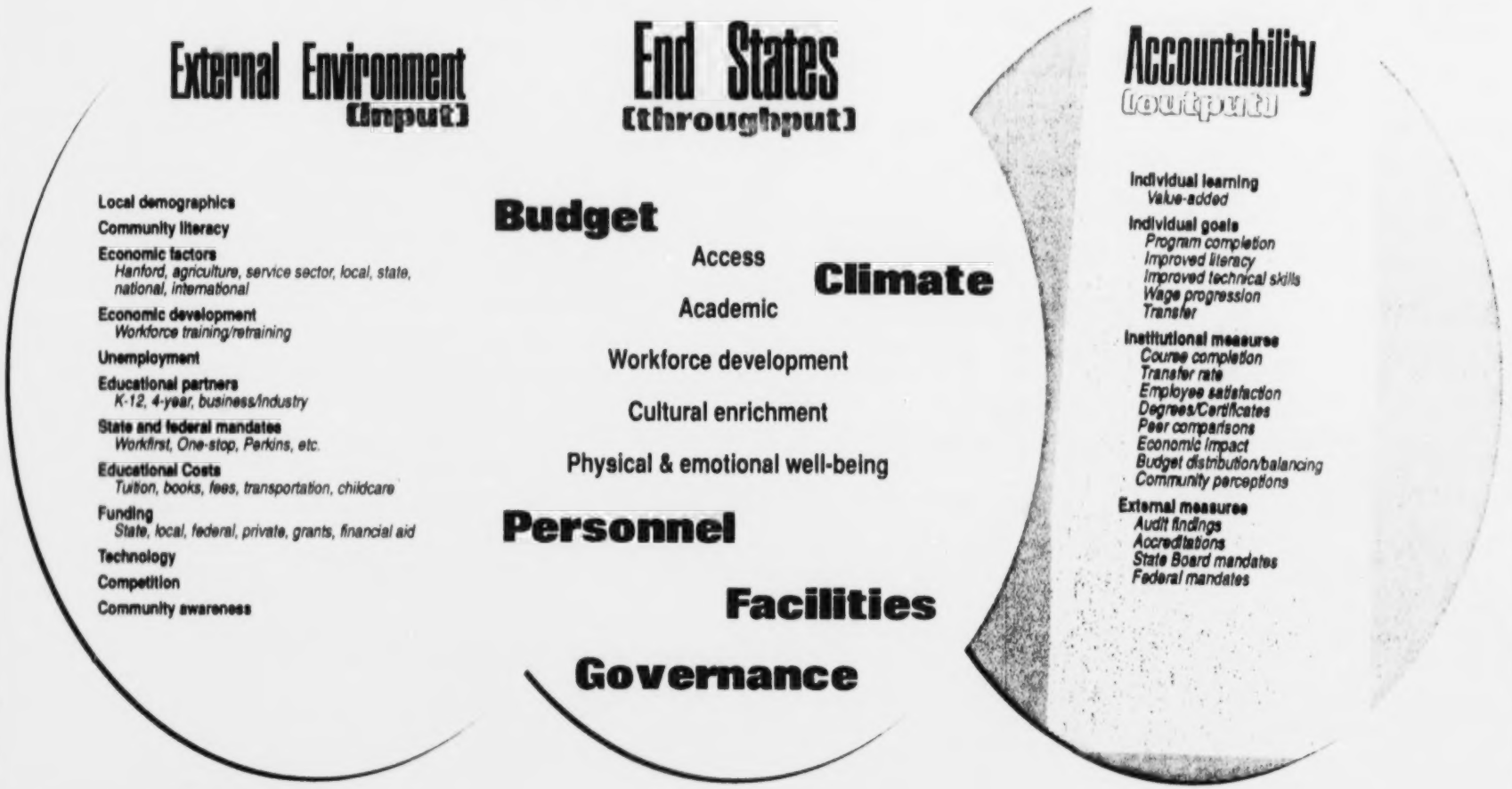
The departmental/program data gathering time line is linked to the budgetary cycle. Including assessment information in the budgetary process effectively ties assessment results to funding decisions. This occurs at the department/program level as part of the departmental yearly budget request. Budget forms ask for assessment data in support of the department's request for funds. Program Review will be addressed during the next academic year with the goal of including what we are already doing on an on-going basis with the institutionalization of assessment at the program/department level.

General education assessment has begun by affirmation of the General Education Foundation Skills by the CBC Assessment Committee and the CBC Curriculum Committee. The Curriculum Committee will be a valuable decision-making resource for general education and curricular issues brought forward by the Assessment Committee as they continue to research assessment issues of college-wide concern and importance.

Ongoing review of course syllabi will continue by the Curriculum Committee. All new courses brought to the committee will continue to require learning outcomes and measurements of assessment. Assessment by faculty in their classrooms will be encouraged and supported. Teaching and learning are priorities at CBC. They are affirmed by our administration and our college processes.

Assessment at CBC is broad-based, inclusive and representative. It supports teaching and student learning and plays a large role in defining quality at CBC.

Columbia Basin College — Strategic Planning Model



CBC's Mission Statement

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Columbia Basin College exists in an environment of diversity, fairness, and equity, to ensure that the people of Benton and Franklin counties have access to educational programs providing sufficient knowledge for higher educational achievement, meaningful employment, cultural enrichment, and physical and emotional well-being.

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